

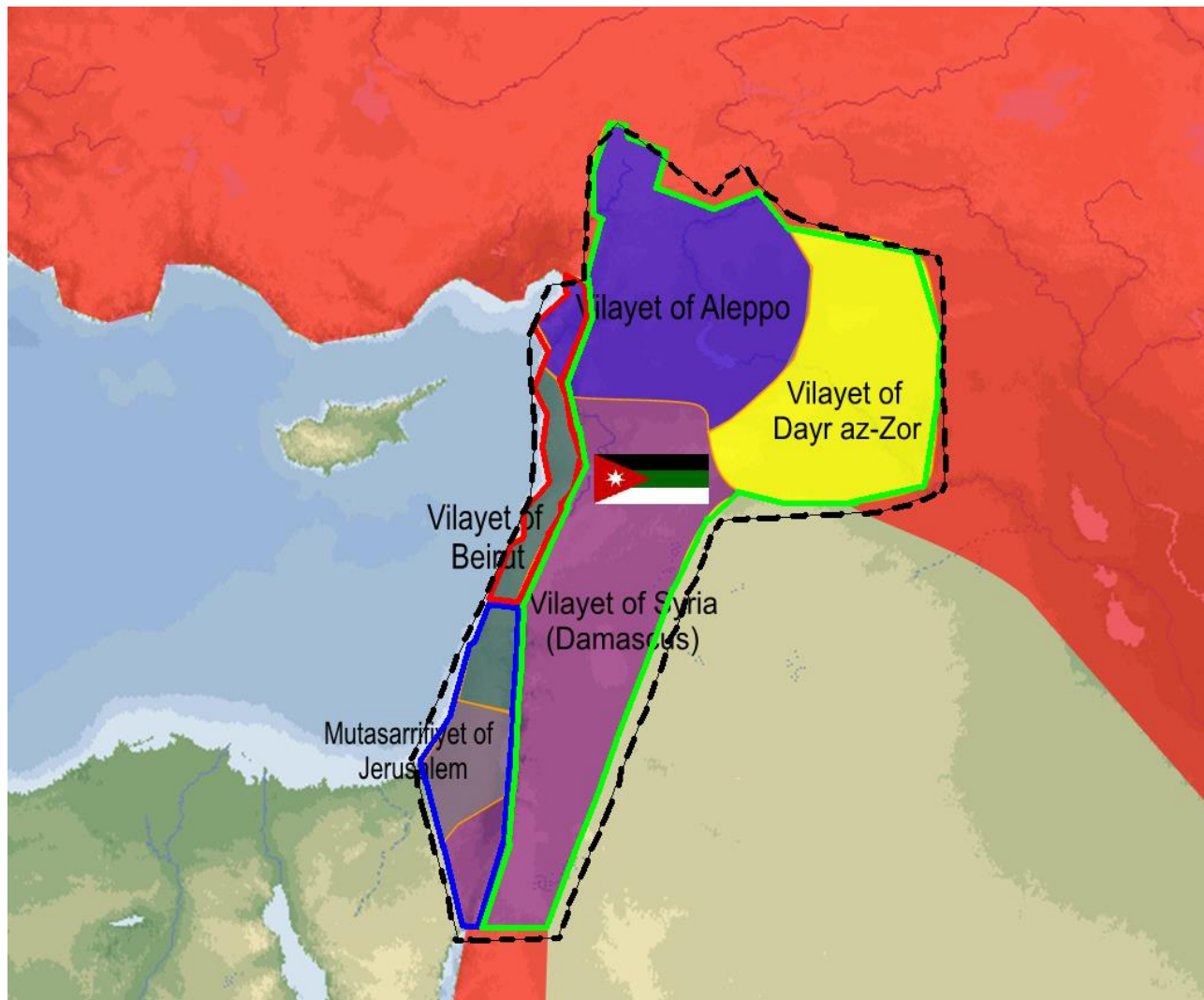
Modern Timeline of Syrian History

1918 October - Arab troops led by Emir Feisal, and supported by British forces, capture Damascus, ending 400 years of Ottoman rule.

1919 - Emir Feisal backs Arab self-rule at the Versailles peace conference, following the defeat of Germany and the Ottoman Empire in World War I.

1919 June - Elections for a Syrian National Congress are held. The new assembly includes delegates from Palestine.

1920 March - The National Congress proclaims Emir Feisal king of Syria "in its natural boundaries" from the Taurus mountains in Turkey to the Sinai desert in Egypt.



Arab Kingdom of Syria, 1920

1920 June - San Remo conference splits up Feisal's newly-created Arab kingdom by placing Syria-Lebanon under a French mandate, and Palestine under British control.

1920 July - French forces occupy Damascus, forcing Feisal to flee abroad.

1920 August - France proclaims a new state of Greater Lebanon.

1922 - Syria is divided into three autonomous regions by the French, with separate areas for the Alawis on the coast and the Druze in the south.

1925-6 - Nationalist agitation against French rule develops into a national uprising. French forces bombard Damascus.

1928 - Elections held for a constituent assembly, which drafts a constitution for Syria. French High Commissioner rejects the proposals, sparking nationalist protests.

1936 - France agrees to Syrian independence in principle but signs an agreement maintaining French military and economic dominance.

1940 - World War II: Syria comes under the control of the Axis powers after France falls to German forces.

1941 - British and Free French troops occupy Syria. General De Gaulle promises to end the French mandate.

1945 - Protests over the slow pace of French withdrawal.

1946 - Last French troops leave Syria.

1947 - Michel Aflaq and Salah-al-Din al-Bitar found the Arab Socialist Baath Party.

1949 - Army officer Adib al-Shishakhli seizes power in the third military coup in the space of a year.

1952 - Al-Shishakli dissolves all political parties.

1954 - Army officers lead a coup against Al-Shishakli, but return a civilian government to power.

1955 - Veteran nationalist Shukri al-Quwatli is elected president. Syria seeks closer ties with Egypt.

1958 February - Syria and Egypt join the United Arab Republic (UAR). Egyptian president Gamal Abdel Nasser heads the new state. He orders the dissolution of Syrian political parties, to the dismay of the Baath party, which had campaigned for union.

1963 March - Army officers seize power. A Baathist cabinet is appointed and Amin al-Hafez becomes president.

1966 February - Salah Jadid leads an internal coup against the civilian Baath leadership, overthrowing Amin al-Hafez and arresting Salah al-Din al-Bitar and Michel Aflaq. Hafez al-Assad becomes defence minister.



1967 June - Israeli forces seize the Golan Heights from Syria and destroy much of Syria's air force in the Six Day War with Egypt, Jordan and Syria.

1970 November - Hafez al-Assad overthrows president Nur al-Din al-Atasi and imprisons Salah Jadid.

1971 March - Assad is elected president for a seven-year term in a plebiscite.

1973 - Rioting breaks out after Assad drops the constitutional requirement that the president must be a Muslim. He is accused of heading an atheist regime. The riots are suppressed by the army.

1973 October - Syria and Egypt go to war with Israel but fail to retake the Golan Heights seized during the 1967 Arab-Israeli war.

1974 May - Syria and Israel sign a disengagement agreement.

1975 February - Assad says he's prepared to make peace with Israel in return for an Israeli withdrawal from "all occupied Arab land".

1976 June - Syrian army intervenes in the Lebanese civil war to ensure that the status quo is maintained, and the Maronites remain in power.

1978 - In response to the Camp David peace agreement between Egypt and Israel, Assad sets out to gain strategic parity with Israel.

1980 - Muslim Brotherhood member tries to assassinate Assad.

1983 - Assad suffers a heart attack, according to reports denied by authorities. Assad's brother Rifaat apparently prepares to take power.

1984 Rifaat is promoted to the post of vice-president.

1990 - Iraq invades Kuwait; Syria joins the US-led coalition against Iraq. This leads to improved relations with Egypt and the US.

1991 October - Syria participates in the Middle East peace conference in Madrid and holds talks with Israel that founder over the Golan Heights issue.

1994 - Assad's son Basil, who was likely to succeed his father, is killed in a car accident.

1998 - Assad's brother Rifaat is "relieved of his post" as vice-president.

1999 December - Talks with Israel over the Golan Heights begin in the US, but are indefinitely postponed the following month.

2000 June - Assad dies and is succeeded by his second son, Bashar.